SPIDER-MAN
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the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®
SMASH SPIDER-MAN! DESTROY HIM! KILL HIM!!
YES! YES!
THEY'RE HELPLESS PAWNS! I CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO FIGHT BACK! I CAN'T!
MADNESS MEANS THE MINDWORM!

While attending a demonstration in radiology, high-school student PETER PARKER was bitten by a spider which had accidentally been exposed to RADIOACTIVE RAYS. Through a miracle of science, Peter soon found that he had GAINED the spider's powers...and had, in effect, become a human spider...

STan Lee PRESENTS: THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN™

# MADNESS MEANS...THE MINDWORM!

TERRIFIC.
THREE DAYS WITHOUT SLEEP--A BATTLE WITH MY EX-BEST FRIEND, WHO TURNS OUT TO BE THE GREEN GOBLIN--AND THEN THIS.
I'D ALMOST MANAGED TO FORGET THAT MY APARTMENT'S BEEN DEMOLISHED..
..THANK YOU, WORLD, FOR REMINDING ME.

GERRY CONWAY AUTHOR * ROSS ANDRU ARTIST
FRANK GIACOIA & D. HUNT, INKERS
ANNETTE KAWECKI, LETTERER
PETRA GOLDBERG, COLORIST
ROY THOMAS, EDITOR

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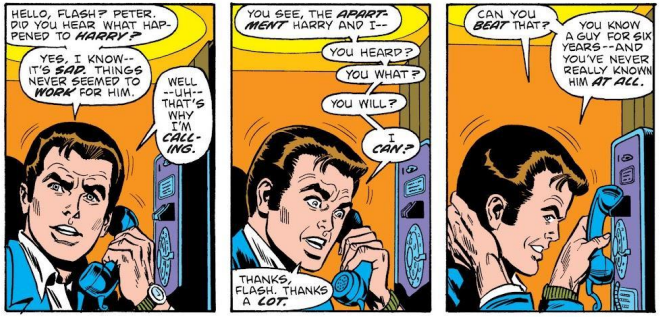
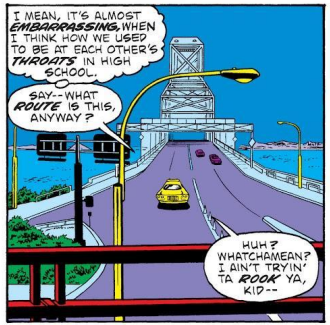
SOMEDAYS I WONDER WHETHER MY LUCK IS WORSE AS SPIDER-MAN OR AS PETER PARKER.
ON THE ONE HAND, I HAVE TO DEAL WITH CRAZY CROOKS. ON THE OTHER HAND, I HAVE TO DEAL WITH--
--LANDLORDS?
POUND!
POUND!
THAT'S RIGHT--HE SAID HE WAS COMING UP TO INSPECT THE APARTMENT TODAY.
TIME FOR A FAST CHANGE--
--'CAUSE I'VE GOT ENOUGH TROUBLE WITHOUT GIVING AWAY MY SPIDEY IDENTITY.
AND FROM THE LOOK ON MR. TEMPLETON'S FACE--
--MY TROUBLES ARE JUST BEGINNING!
I HEARD WHAT HAPPENED HERE.
I DIDN'T BELIEVE IT--
BUT NOW I DO.
HAVE YOU ANY IDEA HOW MUCH IT'S GOING TO COST TO REBUILD THIS UNIT?
NEVER MIND PAINTING--NEVER MIND PLASTERING--
YOU SHOULD SEE THE NEXT FLOOR!
THIS ENTIRE SIDE OF THE BUILDING IS RUINED--
--WATER LEAKING EVERYWHERE--
--CEILINGS COLLAPSING--!
--FLOORS LISTING--
LEASE
MR. PARKER--
YOU ARE THROUGH!
LEASE
I EXPECT YOU OUT BY TOMORROW MORNING.
GOOD DAY, SIR.
GOOD DAY.

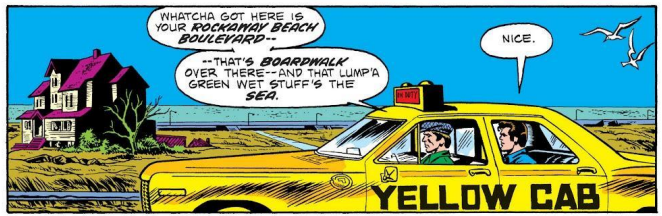
AND SO, AN HOUR OR SO LATER...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT. I'VE CALLED ALMOST EVERYONE I KNOW FROM COLLEGE--AND NONE OF THEM HAS ROOM FOR AN EXTRA ROOMMATE.
I DON'T WANT TO WORRY AUNT MAY--NOW THAT SHE'S LIVING WITH MRS. WATSON AGAIN.
THERE'S ONLY ONE NAME I HAVEN'T TRIED...
...FLASH THOMPSON.
HE AND I ARE OLD ENEMIES.
FLASH THOMPSON
Rockaway Beach Blvd, Rockaway, N.Y. 11693
TEL. 945-03
GRACE U
225 Eas
New York
STILL--WHEN YOU'RE UP AGAINST THE WALL--!

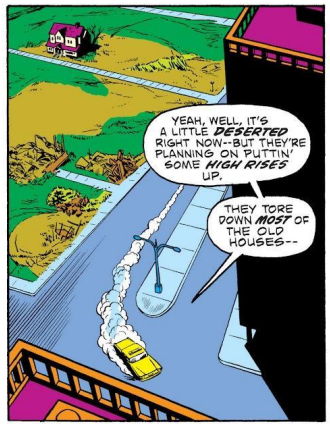

HELLO, FLASH? PETER. DID YOU HEAR WHAT HAPPENED TO HARRY?
YES, I KNOW--IT'S SAD. THINGS NEVER SEEMED TO WORK FOR HIM.
WELL--UH--THAT'S WHY I'M CALLING.
YOU SEE, THE APARTMENT HARRY AND I--
YOU HEARD?
YOU WHAT?
YOU WILL?
I CAN?
THANKS, FLASH. THANKS A LOT.
CAN YOU BEAT THAT?
YOU KNOW A GUY FOR SIX YEARS--AND YOU'VE NEVER REALLY KNOWN HIM AT ALL.

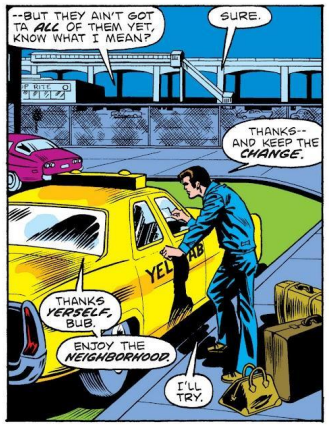
SOON...
FLASH LIVES OUT IN FAR ROCKAWAY--IN AN APARTMENT HE'S MANAGED TO RENT WITH MONEY LEFT OVER FROM HIS STUDENT G.I. LOAN.
THAT'S GOING TO BE QUITE A SWITCH FROM MID-TOWN MANHATTAN... MOVING INTO QUEENS, AND ALL.
I STILL CAN'T GET OVER THE WAY FLASH TREATED ME...
YELLOW
R 1021

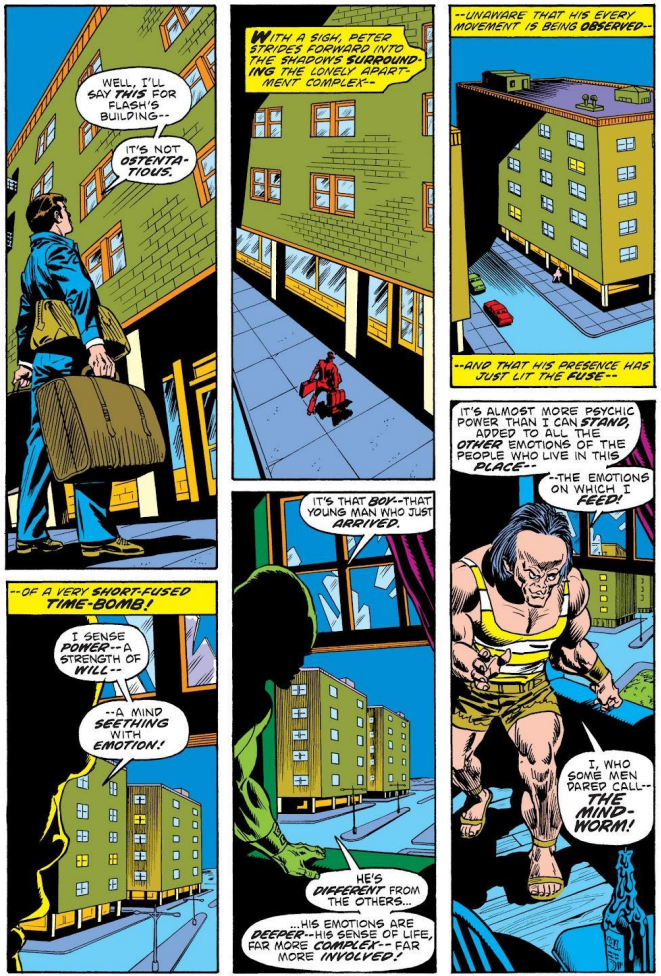

I MEAN, IT'S ALMOST EMBARRASSING, WHEN I THINK HOW WE USED TO BE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS IN HIGH SCHOOL.
SAY--WHAT ROUTE IS THIS, ANYWAY?
HUH? WHATCHAMEAN? I AIN'T TRYIN' TA ROOK YA, KID--

NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN.
IF I'M GOING TO BE LIVING OUT THIS WAY--
FAR ROCKAWAY
YEAH, I GETCHA. WELL, THAT WAS THE MARINE PARKWAY BRIDGE BACK THERE--
--AND THIS HERE'S THE BEACH CHANNEL DRIVE, SEE?
YELLOW CAB


WHATCHA GOT HERE IS YOUR ROCKAWAY BEACH BOULEVARD--
--THAT'S BOARDWALK OVER THERE--AND THAT LUMP'A GREEN WET STUFF'S THE SEA.
NICE.
YELLOW CAB

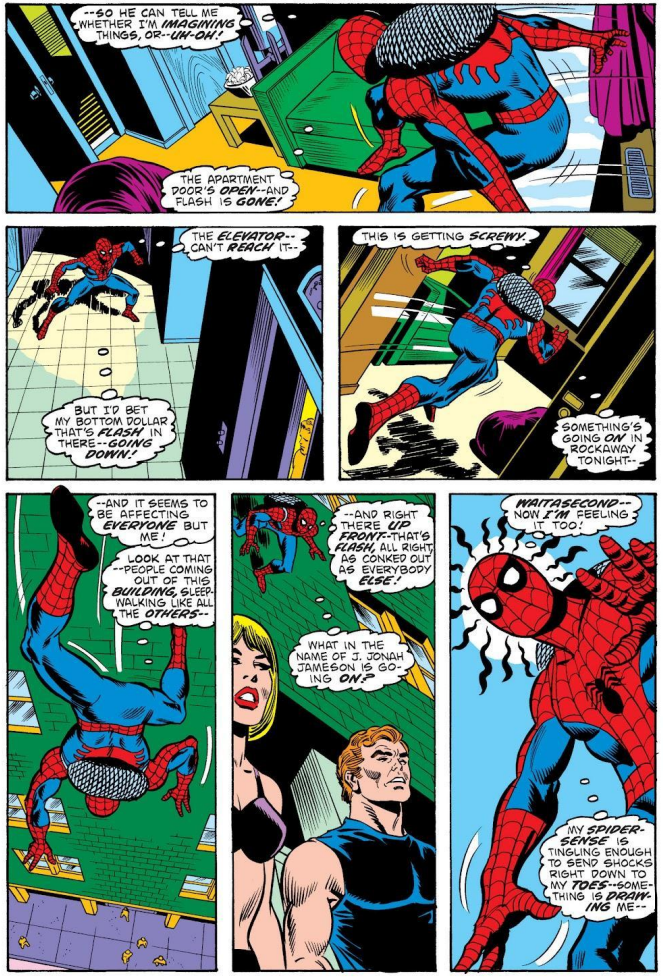

YEAH, WELL, IT'S A LITTLE DESERTED RIGHT NOW--BUT THEY'RE PLANNING ON PUTTIN' SOME HIGH RISES UP.
THEY TORE DOWN MOST OF THE OLD HOUSES--


--BUT THEY AIN'T GOT TA ALL OF THEM YET, KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
SURE.
THANKS--AND KEEP THE CHANGE.
THANKS YERSELF, BUB.
ENJOY THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
I'LL TRY.


WELL, I'LL SAY THIS FOR FLASH'S BUILDING--
IT'S NOT OSTENTATIOUS.
WITH A SIGH, PETER STRIDES FORWARD INTO THE SHADOWS SURROUNDING THE LONELY APARTMENT COMPLEX--
--UNAWARE THAT HIS EVERY MOVEMENT IS BEING OBSERVED--
--AND THAT HIS PRESENCE HAS JUST LIT THE FUSE--
--OF A VERY SHORT-FUSED TIME-BOMB!
I SENSE POWER--A STRENGTH OF WILL--
--A MIND SEETHING WITH EMOTION!
IT'S THAT BOY--THAT YOUNG MAN WHO JUST ARRIVED.
HE'S DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS...
...HIS EMOTIONS ARE DEEPER--HIS SENSE OF LIFE, FAR MORE COMPLEX--FAR MORE INVOLVED!
IT'S ALMOST MORE PSYCHIC POWER THAN I CAN STAND, ADDED TO ALL THE OTHER EMOTIONS OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THIS PLACE--
--THE EMOTIONS ON WHICH I FEED!
I, WHO SOME MEN DARED CALL--THE MIND-WORM!

THE MAN SNORTS--A FOUL, UNHEALTHY SOUND IN THE NEAR-SILENCE OF THE DILAPIDATED SHACK.
MOVING WITH A STRANGE, UNCANNY GRACE, HE SETTLES HIMSELF ON THE DUSTY FLOOR--ARRANGES HIS MISSHAPEN BODY--
--AND BEGINS TO DO--SOMETHING.
JUST WHAT IT IS HE DOES, WE CAN'T QUITE SAY.
IN A WAY IT'S A FORM OF MEDITATION--OR SO IT SEEMS--AND IN ANOTHER WAY, A DARKER WAY--
--IT SEEMS TO BE--
--A FEEDING.
LATER:
--NICE PLACE YOU HAVE HERE, FLASH.
LISTEN, I HOPE I WON'T BE--YOU KNOW, INTRUDING.
FORGET IT.
AFTER MY STINT IN THE ARMY, A ROOM TO MYSELF IS LIKE WIDE-OPEN SPACES.
YOU NEVER TOLD ME, FLASH--HOW'D YOU LIKE THE ARMY, ANYWAY?
PARKER, WHEN IT COMES TO THE ARMY --"LIKE" IS WHAT YOU CALL YOUR INOPERABLE TERM.
YOU DON'T LIKE OR DISLIKE--YOU ENDURE.
Y'KNOW, FLASH--I THINK THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP.

MUCH LATER, AFTER SEVERAL HOURS OF NON-STOP CONVERSATION, DURING WHICH TWO YOUNG MEN REDISCOVER THE MAXIM --"AGE, LIKE DISTANCE, LENDS DOUBLE CHARM"--
YAWN!
WELL--THERE'S ONE SHATTERED ILLUSION OF MY YOUTH.
I ALWAYS THOUGHT IF YOU GOT FLASH AND I ALONE IN THE SAME ROOM, WE'D START SLUGGING EACH OTHER.
INSTEAD, WE FIND OUT HOW MUCH WE HAVE IN COMMON--AND TALK EACH OTHER TO SLEEP!
HMM--DON'T FEEL LIKE SLEEPING MYSELF--HEY, WHAT I DO FEEL LIKE--
"--IS SOME FREE-WHEELING WEB-SLINGING!"
THUS, SOME TEN MINUTES LATER, A FAMILIAR COSTUMED FIGURE SLIPS SILENTLY THROUGH THE SHADOWS OF FLASH THOMPSON'S LIVING ROOM--
--OUT INTO THE OCEAN-SWEET AIR OF A PART OF QUEENS CALLED FAR ROCKAWAY.
NOW THIS IS WHAT I CALL LIVING. FUNNY--NO MATTER HOW EXHAUSTED I GET; PUTTING ON THIS CRAZY OUTFIT ALWAYS--
HUH? AM I SEEING WHAT I THINK I'M SEEING?
PEOPLE--DOZENS, HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE--
--MOVING LIKE A BUNCH OF ZOMBIES--OR SLEEPWALKERS --TOWARD THE SHORE!
I'VE GOT TO GET FLASH TO THE WINDOW--


--SO HE CAN TELL ME WHETHER I'M IMAGINING THINGS, OR--UH-OH!
THE APARTMENT DOOR'S OPEN--AND FLASH IS GONE!
THE ELEVATOR--CAN'T REACH IT--
BUT I'D BET MY BOTTOM DOLLAR THAT'S FLASH IN THERE--GOING DOWN!
THIS IS GETTING SCREWY.
SOMETHING'S GOING ON IN ROCKAWAY TONIGHT--
--AND IT SEEMS TO BE AFFECTING EVERYONE BUT ME!
LOOK AT THAT --PEOPLE COMING OUT OF THIS BUILDING, SLEEP-WALKING LIKE ALL THE OTHERS--
--AND RIGHT THERE UP FRONT--THAT'S FLASH, ALL RIGHT, AS CONKED OUT AS EVERYBODY ELSE!
WHAT IN THE NAME OF J. JONAH JAMESON IS GOING ON?
WAITASECOND--NOW I'M FEELING IT TOO!
MY SPIDER-SENSE IS TINGLING ENOUGH TO SEND SHOCKS RIGHT DOWN TO MY TOES--SOMETHING IS DRAWING ME--

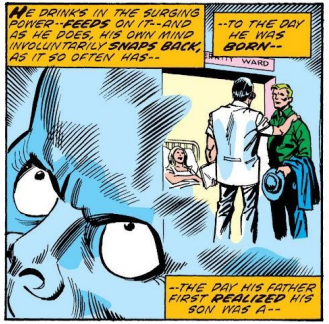
--PULLING ME--AND THE REST OF THIS BURG--TOWARD THAT HOUSE!
I'M ABLE TO RESIST IT--SOMEHOW--

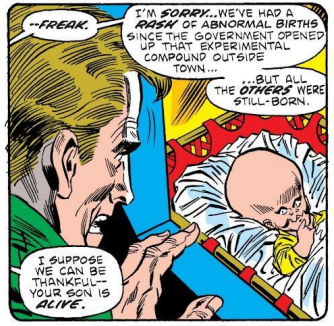
"BUT I SEEM TO BE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN! MEN--WOMEN--CHILDREN--PEOPLE WHO ARE HALF-UNDRESSED--GIRLS IN NIGHTGOWNS, MEN IN PAJAMAS--
"THEY'RE ALL HELPLESS!"

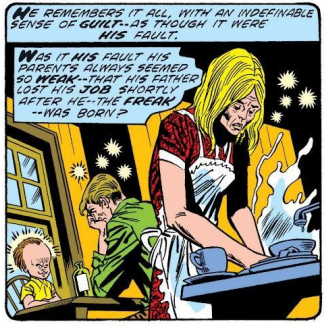
WHICH MEANS THEY NEED HELP--
WHICH MEANS THEY NEED ME!

LIKE LEMMINGS DRAWN TO THE SEA BY INSTINCT, THE CROWDS OF APPARENTLY-COMATOSE ROCKAWAYS COME SLOWLY TOGETHER IN A MILLING KNOT--

--AND THE SHEER PSYCHIC FORCE OF THEIR COLLECTED MINDS IS ALMOST ENOUGH TO DRIVE THE SELF-STYLED MINDWORM WILD!
THIS--THIS IS MORE--
--MORE THAN I'VE EVER KNOWN--SO INTENSE--
--MENTAL ENERGY--FLOODING THROUGH ME--!


ME DRINKS IN THE SURGING POWER--FEEDS ON IT--AND AS HE DOES, HIS OWN MIND INVOLUNTARILY SNAPS BACK, AS IT SO OFTEN HAS--
--TO THE DAY HE WAS BORN--
--THE DAY HIS FATHER FIRST REALIZED HIS SON WAS A--


--FREAK.
I'M SORRY..WE'VE HAD A RASH OF ABNORMAL BIRTHS SINCE THE GOVERNMENT OPENED UP THAT EXPERIMENTAL COMPOUND OUTSIDE TOWN...
...BUT ALL THE OTHERS WERE STILL-BORN.
I SUPPOSE WE CAN BE THANKFUL--YOUR SON IS ALIVE.

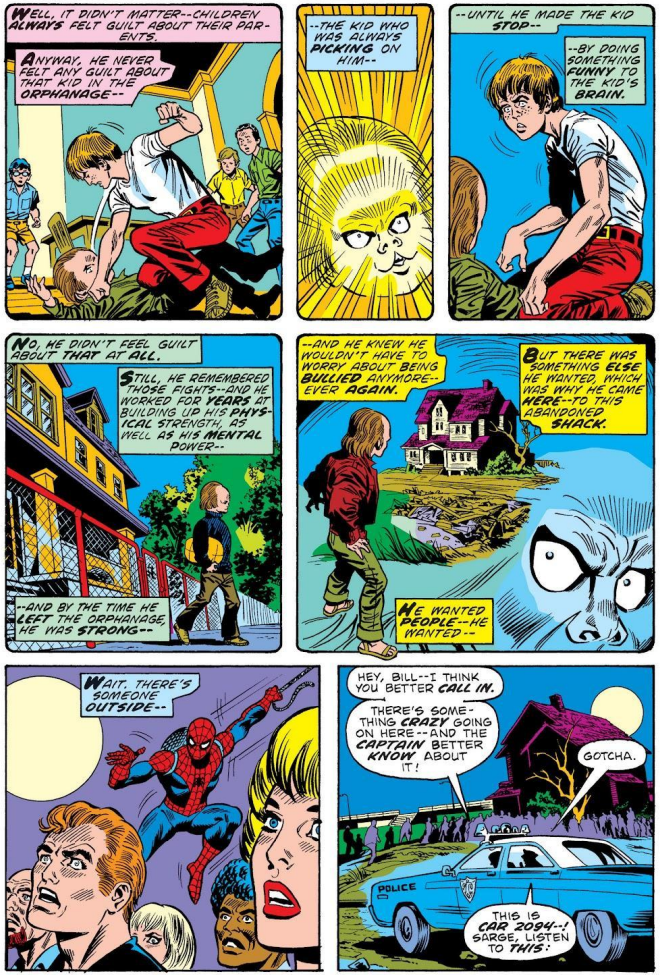

ME REMEMBERS IT ALL, WITH AN INDEFINABLE SENSE OF GUILT--AS THOUGH IT WERE HIS FAULT.
WAS IT HIS FAULT HIS PARENTS ALWAYS SEEMED SO WEAK--THAT HIS FATHER LOST HIS JOB SHORTLY AFTER HE--THE FREAK--WAS BORN?

WAS IT HIS FAULT HIS MOTHER BECAME MORE HAGGARD AS THE MONTHS PASSED--? WAS IT HIS FAULT SHE SLOWLY LOST HER STRENGTH--BECAME A WALKING CORPSE--

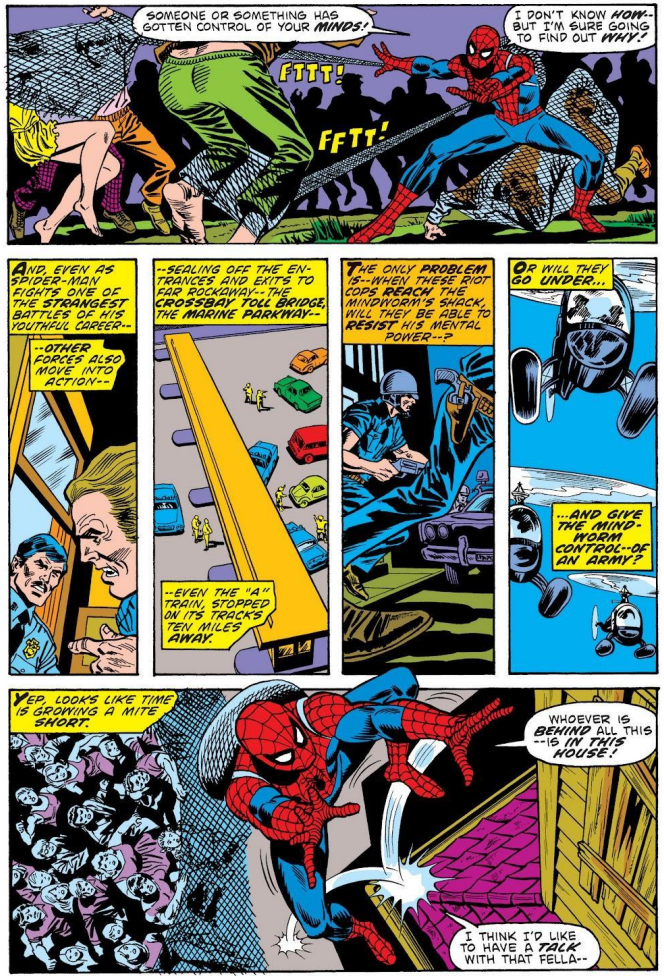
--AND FINALLY --DIED?
NO. IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN HIS FAULT--THOUGH, THE WAY HIS FATHER LOOKED AT HIM, LIKE HE WAS LOOKING AT A MONSTER--!
THAT WASN'T NICE AT ALL.

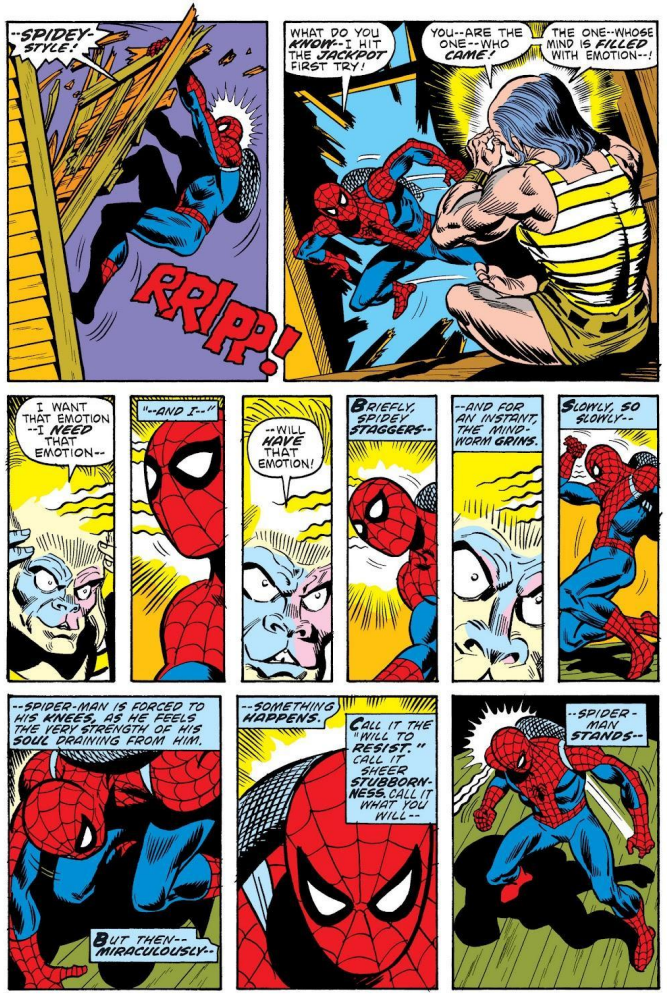
AND THE WAY HIS FATHER RAN--
THAT WASN'T NICE EITHER.

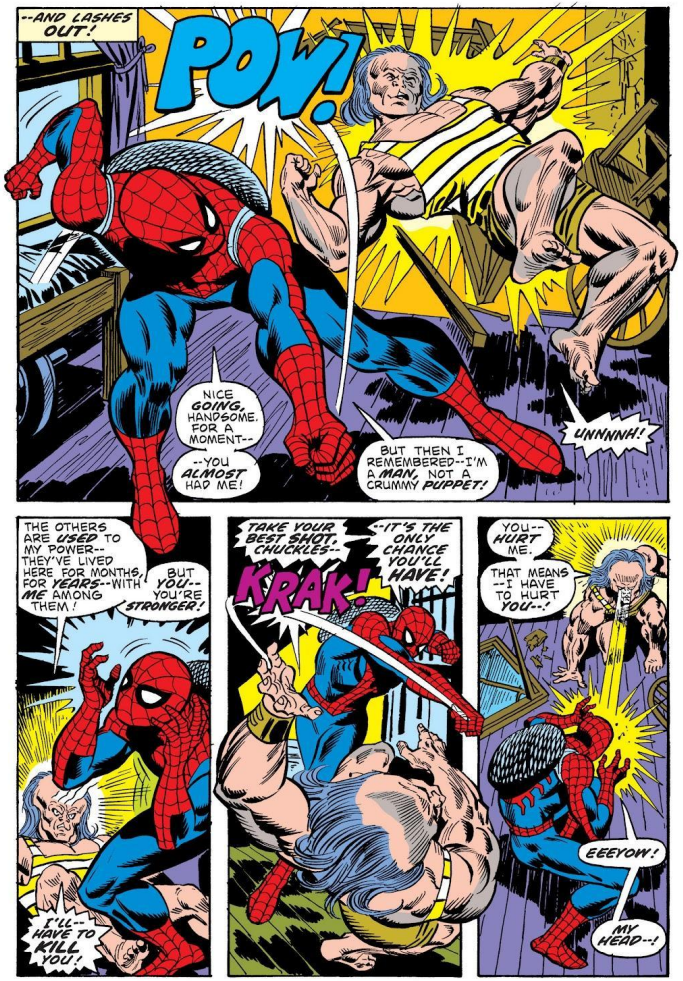
NO.
BUT WAS IT HIS FAULT HIS FATHER RAN IN FRONT OF A SPEEDING CAR?
SO WHY DID HE FEEL THIS--THIS GUILT?

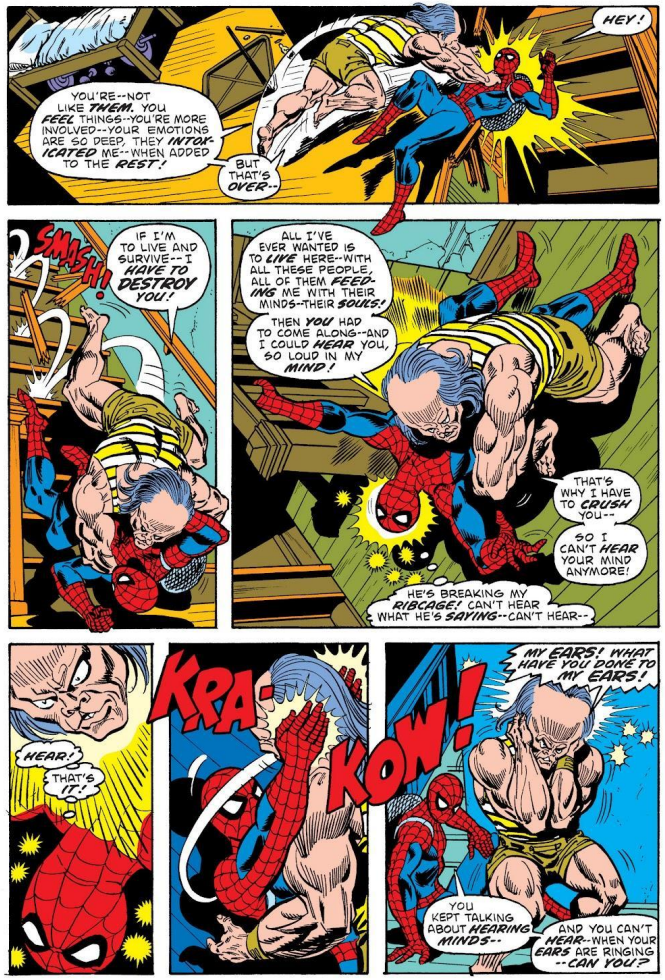

WELL, IT DIDN'T MATTER--CHILDREN ALWAYS FELT GUILT ABOUT THEIR PARENTS.
ANYWAY, HE NEVER FELT ANY GUILT ABOUT THAT KID IN THE ORPHANAGE--
--THE KID WHO WAS ALWAYS PICKING ON HIM--
--UNTIL HE MADE THE KID STOP--
--BY DOING SOMETHING FUNNY TO THE KID'S BRAIN.
NO, HE DIDN'T FEEL GUILT ABOUT THAT AT ALL.
STILL, HE REMEMBERED THOSE FIGHTS--AND HE WORKED FOR YEARS AT BUILDING UP HIS PHYSICAL STRENGTH, AS WELL AS HIS MENTAL POWER--
--AND BY THE TIME HE LEFT THE ORPHANAGE HE WAS STRONG--
--AND HE KNEW HE WOULDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT BEING BULLIED ANYMORE--EVER AGAIN.
BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE HE WANTED, WHICH WAS WHY HE CAME HERE--TO THIS ABANDONED SHACK.
HE WANTED PEOPLE--HE WANTED--
WAIT. THERE'S SOMEONE OUTSIDE--
HEY, BILL--I THINK YOU BETTER CALL IN.
THERE'S SOMETHING CRAZY GOING ON HERE--AND THE CAPTAIN BETTER KNOW ABOUT IT!
GOTCHA.
POLICE
THIS IS CAR 2094--! SARGE, LISTEN TO THIS:

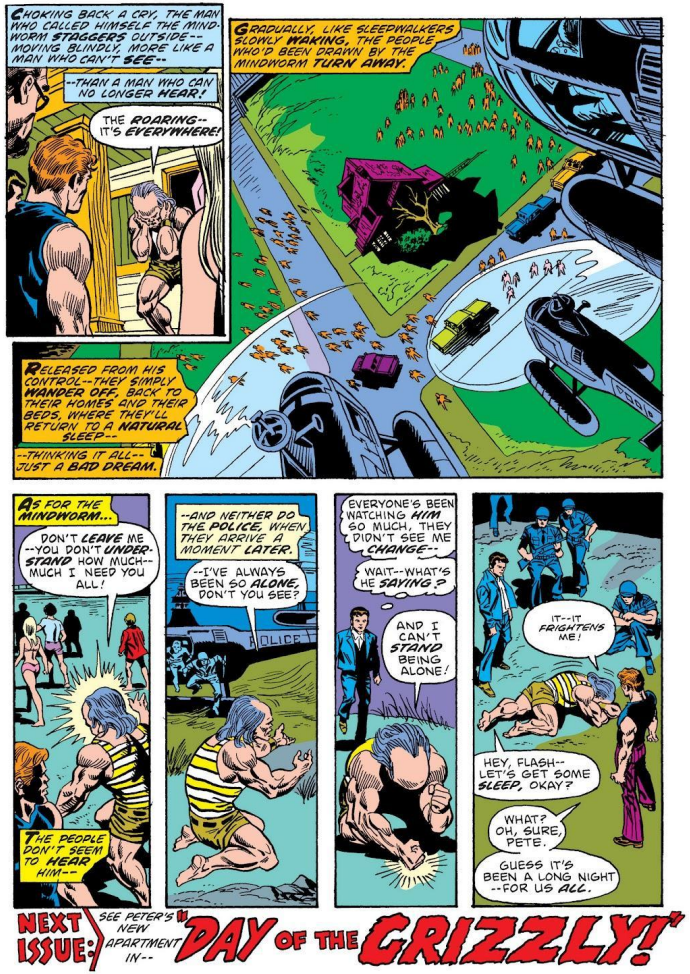
THE COP MAKES HIS REPORT QUICKLY, AND IT'S A GOOD THING HE DOES--FOR, NO SOONER HAS HE FINISHED THAN HE AND HIS PARTNER ALSO FALL PREY TO THE STRANGE SIREN CALL--
--AND WANDER OFF, LEAVING THEIR RADIO SPUTTERING--
--AND THE DISPATCH SERGEANT ANNOYED--AND SOMEWHAT FRIGHTENED!
HELLO, CAPTAIN? SIR, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BRIEFE THIS--
BUT THE CAPTAIN DOES--AND, WHEN THE SERGEANT STOPS EXPLAINING--
DON'T JUST SIT THERE, MAN--GET ME THE LIEUTENANT IN CHARGE OF THE RIOT SQUAD!
MOVE!
SPEAKING OF MOVING--THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT OUR HERO'S TRYING TO DO, WITH A LITTLE LUCK--!
THESE PEOPLE ARE LIKE A WALL! CAN'T--GET--PAST--!
KILL HIM
KILL HIM
KILL HIM
HUH?
WELL, THANKS FOR LETTING ME--
UH-OH!
AS ONE CREATURE, THE CROWD OBEYS THE MENTAL COMMAND--THROWING ITSELF UPON OUR HARRIED HERO--
--REACHING OUT WITH CLAWED FINGERS, TO REND AND SLAY...
...WELL, ALMOST.
HOLD IT!
YOU PEOPLE ARE CRAZY!


SOMEONE OR SOMETHING HAS GOTTEN CONTROL OF YOUR MINDS!
I DON'T KNOW HOW--BUT I'M SURE GOING TO FIND OUT WHY!
FTTT!
FFTT!
AND, EVEN AS SPIDER-MAN FIGHTS ONE OF THE STRANGEST BATTLES OF HIS YOUTHFUL CAREER--
--OTHER FORCES ALSO MOVE INTO ACTION--
--SEALING OFF THE ENTRANCES AND EXITS TO FAR ROCKAWAY--THE CROSSBAY TOLL BRIDGE, THE MARINE PARKWAY--
--EVEN THE "A" TRAIN, STOPPED ON ITS TRACKS TEN MILES AWAY.
THE ONLY PROBLEM IS--WHEN THESE RIOT COPS REACH THE MINDWORM'S SHACK, WILL THEY BE ABLE TO RESIST HIS MENTAL POWER--?
OR WILL THEY GO UNDER...
...AND GIVE THE MIND-WORM CONTROL--OF AN ARMY?
YEP, LOOKS LIKE TIME IS GROWING A MITE SHORT.
WHOEVER IS BEHIND ALL THIS --IS IN THIS HOUSE!
I THINK I'D LIKE TO HAVE A TACK WITH THAT FELLA--


--SPIDEY-STYLE!
RRIP!
WHAT DO YOU KNOW--I HIT THE JACKPOT FIRST TRY!
YOU--ARE THE ONE--WHO CAME!
THE ONE--WHOSE MIND IS FILLED WITH EMOTION--!
I WANT THAT EMOTION --I NEED THAT EMOTION--
"--AND I--"
--WILL HAVE THAT EMOTION!
BRIEFLY, SPIDEY STAGGERS--
--AND FOR AN INSTANT, THE MIND-WORM GRINS.
SLOWLY, SO SLOWLY--
--SPIDER-MAN IS FORCED TO HIS KNEES, AS HE FEELS THE VERY STRENGTH OF HIS SOUL DRAINING FROM HIM.
BUT THEN--MIRACULOUSLY--
--SOMETHING HAPPENS.
CALL IT THE "WILL TO RESIST." CALL IT SHEER STUBBORNNESS. CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL--
--SPIDER-MAN STANDS--


--AND LASHES OUT!
POW!
NICE GOING, HANDSOME. FOR A MOMENT--
--YOU ALMOST HAD ME!
BUT THEN I REMEMBERED--I'M A MAN, NOT A CRUMMY PUPPET!
UNNNNH!
THE OTHERS ARE USED TO MY POWER--THEY'VE LIVED HERE FOR MONTHS, FOR YEARS--WITH ME AMONG THEM!
BUT YOU--YOU'RE STRONGER!
I'LL--HAVE TO KILL YOU!
TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT, CHUCKLES--
--IT'S THE ONLY CHANCE YOU'LL HAVE!
KRAK!
YOU--HURT ME.
THAT MEANS--I HAVE TO HURT YOU--!
EEEYOW!
MY HEAD--!


HEY!
YOU'RE--NOT LIKE THEM. YOU FEEL THINGS--YOU'RE MORE INVOLVED--YOUR EMOTIONS ARE SO DEEP, THEY INTOXICATED ME--WHEN ADDED TO THE REST!
BUT THAT'S OVER--
SMASH!
IF I'M TO LIVE AND SURVIVE--I HAVE TO DESTROY YOU!
ALL I'VE EVER WANTED IS TO LIKE HERE--WITH ALL THESE PEOPLE, ALL OF THEM FEEDING ME WITH THEIR MINDS--THEIR SOULS!
THEN YOU HAD TO COME ALONG--AND I COULD HEAR YOU, SO LOUD IN MY MIND!
THAT'S WHY I HAVE TO CRUSH YOU--
SO I CAN'T HEAR YOUR MIND ANYMORE!
HE'S BREAKING MY RIBCAGE! CAN'T HEAR WHAT HE'S SAYING--CAN'T HEAR--
HEAR!
THAT'S IT!
KRA-
KOW!
MY EARS! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO MY EARS!
YOU KEPT TALKING ABOUT HEARING MINDS--
AND YOU CAN'T HEAR--WHEN YOUR EARS ARE RINGING --CAN YOU?


CHOKING BACK A CRY, THE MAN WHO CALLED HIMSELF THE MINDWORM STAGGERS OUTSIDE--MOVING BLINDLY, MORE LIKE A MAN WHO CAN'T SEE--
--THAN A MAN WHO CAN NO LONGER HEAR!
THE ROARING--IT'S EVERYWHERE!
GRADUALLY, LIKE SLEEPWALKERS SLOWLY WAKING, THE PEOPLE WHO'D BEEN DRAWN BY THE MINDWORM TURN AWAY.
RELEASED FROM HIS CONTROL--THEY SIMPLY WANDER OFF, BACK TO THEIR HOMES AND THEIR BEDS, WHERE THEY'LL RETURN TO A NATURAL SLEEP--
--THINKING IT ALL--JUST A BAD DREAM.
AS FOR THE MINDWORM...
DON'T LEAVE ME --YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW MUCH--MUCH I NEED YOU ALL!
THE PEOPLE DON'T SEEM TO HEAR HIM--
--AND NEITHER DO THE POLICE, WHEN THEY ARRIVE A MOMENT/ LATER.
--I'VE ALWAYS BEEN SO ALONE, DON'T YOU SEE?
POLICE
EVERYONE'S BEEN WATCHING HIM SO MUCH, THEY DIDN'T SEE ME CHANGE--
WAIT--WHAT'S HE SAYING?
AND I CAN'T STAND BEING ALONE!
IT--IT FRIGHTENS ME!
HEY, FLASH--LET'S GET SOME SLEEP, OKAY?
WHAT? OH, SURE, PETE.
GUESS IT'S BEEN A LONG NIGHT --FOR US ALL.
NEXT ISSUE:
SEE PETER'S NEW APARTMENT IN--
"DAY OF THE GRIZZLY!"

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MARVEL® COMICS GROUP
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PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN™
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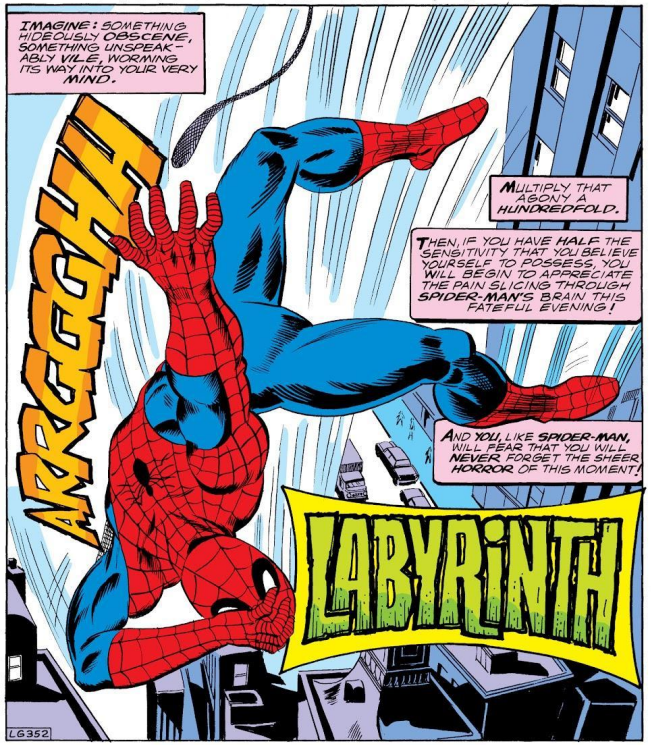
ALL-NEW OFFBEAT EXCITEMENT!
WHO DARES ENTER THE LABYRINTH!

While attending a demonstration in radiology, student PETER PARKER was bitten by a spider which had accidentally been exposed to RADIOACTIVE RAYS. Through a miracle of science, Peter soon found that he had GAINED the arachnid's powers...and had, in effect, become a human spider...

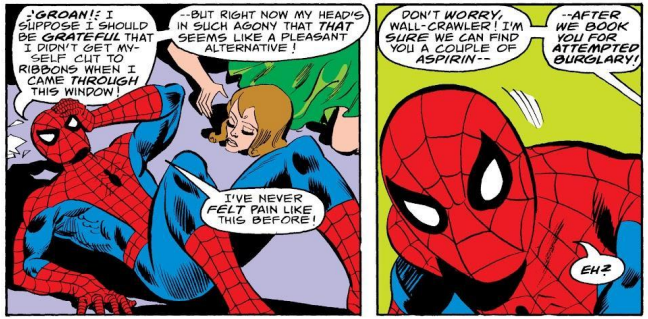
Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN!**

TONY ISABELLA / GUEST WRITER | LEE ELIAS & MIKE ESPOSITO / GUEST ARTISTS | CLEM ROBINS / LETTERER | BOB SHAREN / COLORIST | J. SHOOTER / EDITOR


IMAGINE: SOMETHING HIDEOUSLY OBSCENE, SOMETHING UNSPEAKABLY VILE, WORMING ITS WAY INTO YOUR VERY MIND.
ARRGGH!!
MULTIPLY THAT AGONY A HUNDREDFOLD.
THEN, IF YOU HAVE HALF THE SENSITIVITY THAT YOU BELIEVE YOURSELF TO POSSESS, YOU WILL BEGIN TO APPRECIATE THE PAIN SLICING THROUGH SPIDER-MAN'S BRAIN THIS FATEFUL EVENING!
AND YOU, LIKE SPIDER-MAN, WILL FEAR THAT YOU WILL NEVER FORGET THE SHEER HORROR OF THIS MOMENT!
LABYRINTH
LG352

NO! I NEVER STOPPED TO CONSIDER THAT HE MIGHT BE SEVERAL STORIES ABOVE THE STREET WHEN I STRUCK!
IF HE FALLS TO HIS DEATH, I'LL BE ROBBED OF THE REVENGE I PLANNED.

WHEW! PAIN'S EASED UP--BUT MY SPIDER-SENSE IS GOING CRAZY--AS IF I WERE BEING ATTACKED FROM A DOZEN DIRECTIONS AT ONCE!
BUT THAT'LL BE THE LEAST OF MY PROBLEMS IF I DON'T MAKE WITH SOME FAST WEB-SLINGING!

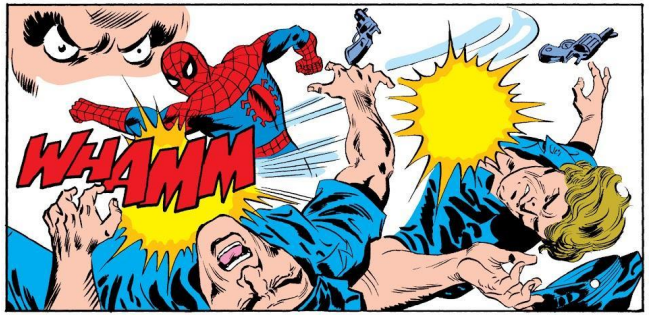

:GROAN!: I SUPPOSE I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL THAT I DIDN'T GET MYSELF CUT TO RIBBONS WHEN I CAME THROUGH THIS WINDOW!
--BUT RIGHT NOW MY HEAD'S IN SUCH AGONY THAT THAT SEEMS LIKE A PLEASANT ALTERNATIVE!
I'VE NEVER FELT PAIN LIKE THIS BEFORE!


DON'T WORRY, WALL-CRAWLER! I'M SURE WE CAN FIND YOU A COUPLE OF ASPIRIN--
--AFTER WE BOOK YOU FOR ATTEMPTED BURGLARY!
EH?

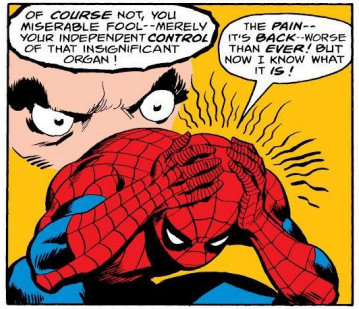
RAISE 'EM, MISTER!
EASY ON THOSE TRIGGER FINGERS, FELLAS. I'VE GOT THIS THING ABOUT GETTING BULLET HOLES IN MY SPIDEY-SUIT--
--ESPECIALLY WHILE I'M WEARING IT!

A HASSLE WITH NEW YORK'S FINEST I DON'T NEED RIGHT NOW. SO I'LL JUST PLUG THEIR GUN BARRELS WITH MY WEBBING AND BE ON MY MERRY--
W-AAAGHH!

HEAR ME, SPIDER-MAN! I SHALL NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO INTERFERE WITH MY PLANS FOR YOU!
KILL THEM!
L-LOOK AT THE WAY HE'S COMING AT US! SPIDER-MAN IS OUT FOR BLOOD THIS TIME!
OUR BLOOD!


WHAMM

OH MY GOD!
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? IF I HADN'T PULLED THAT PUNCH AT THE LAST MOMENT, I WOULD'VE KILLED THESE MEN!
AM I LOSING MY MIND?


OF COURSE NOT, YOU MISERABLE FOOL--MERELY YOUR INDEPENDENT CONTROL OF THAT INSIGNIFICANT ORGAN!
THE PAIN-- IT'S BACK--WORSE THAN EVER! BUT NOW I KNOW WHAT IT IS!

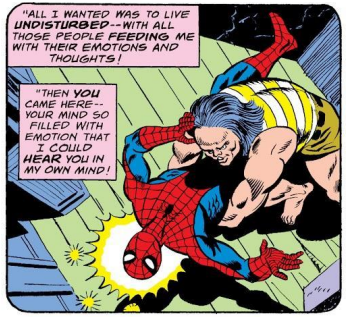
SOME MIND-SUCKING WEASEL IS DOING HIS DARNEDEST TO TURN ME INTO HIS OWN PERSONAL SLAVE!
BUT IT'S NOT GONNA WORK--
I'M A MAN-- NOT SOME CRUMMY PUPPET!

I WOULD FIND THAT SOMEWHAT EASIER TO BELIEVE, SPIDER-MAN, IF YOU DID NOT RESPOND SO EAGERLY TO MY EVERY WHIM--NOW, HURL YOURSELF AGAINST THE WALL!
UNNNNH!

TAKE HEED, ARACHNID. HAD I SO WISHED, I COULD HAVE COMMANDED YOU TO BATTER YOURSELF AGAINST THAT WALL UNTIL YOUR EVERY BONE WAS REDUCED TO MERE POWDER.
I HOPE YOU'RE NOT EXPECTING ME TO THANK YOU.
HARDLY. HOWEVER, I DO EXPECT YOU TO FOLLOW MY THOUGHTS TO YOUR FINAL DESTINATION--THE PLACE WHERE THE WRONGS YOU VISITED UPON ME SHALL AT LAST BE AVENGED!
I'M ON MY WAY, CHUCKLES...
I JUST HOPE YOUR INSURANCE IS PAID UP!
BUT THE AIR OF CONFIDENCE THAT CARRIES OUR WEB-SWINGING WONDER FROM MANHATTAN TO QUEENS IN RECORD TIME IS ABRUPTLY SHATTERED...
...WHEN HE REACHES HIS DESTINATION!
THIS IS FLASH THOMPSON'S NEIGHBORHOOD--BUT IT HASN'T LOOKED THIS DESERTED IN YEARS!
I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS!
THIS RUN-DOWN SHACK WAS FLATTENED AGES AGO! THEY WERE GOING TO BUILD SOME HIGH-RISES HERE!
THEY DID BUILD SOME HIGH-RISES HERE!
SO HOW COME THIS HORROR HOTEL IS STILL STANDING? JUST AS SOLID AS IT WAS THE NIGHT I FOUGHT--
YOU!
WELCOME TO RETRIBUTION, SPIDER-MAN!

CHAPTER 2 into the MAZE of MADNESS
THERE'S NO NEED FOR DRAMATICS, SPIDER-MAN, OR DO YOU FEAR TO CALL ME BY THE NAME OTHER FOOLS HAVE GIVEN ME--
--THE MINDWORM!
I DON'T CARE IF THEY CALL YOU JIMMY CARTER, ACE. I'M JUST HERE TO PAY YOU BACK FOR THAT LITTLE MIND-TRIP YOU PUT ME THROUGH TONIGHT--
--AND TO MAKE SURE YOU NEVER TRY IT AGAIN!
THWIP
THWIP
AND HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO ACCOMPLISH THAT TASK, MY ANGRY YOUNG MAN--
--WHEN I CAN BEST YOUR GREATEST WEAPON WITH NO MORE EFFORT THAN YOU WOULD EXPEND TO SWAT A FLY?
FEEL MY POWER--AND KNOW THAT ONE WHO WAS BORN A FREAK HAS GROWN INTO SOMETHING FAR MORE TERRIFYING!
SKWIZZ

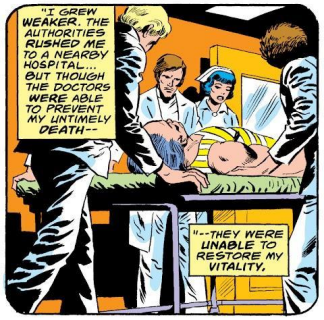
"A PSYCHIC PARASITE, THEY CALLED ME, BECAUSE OF MY ABILITY TO GAIN STRENGTH FROM THE MINDS AND SOULS OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED WITHIN RANGE OF MY POWER.*
*AS SHOWN IN SPIDER-MAN #138.-- JIM.

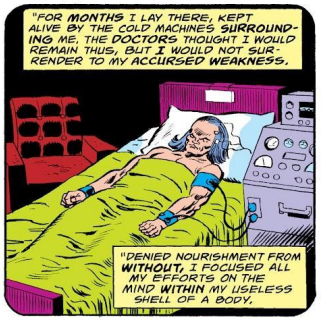

"ALL I WANTED WAS TO LIVE UNDISTURBED--WITH ALL THOSE PEOPLE FEEDING ME WITH THEIR EMOTIONS AND THOUGHTS!
"THEN YOU CAME HERE--YOUR MIND SO FILLED WITH EMOTION THAT I COULD HEAR YOU IN MY OWN MIND!

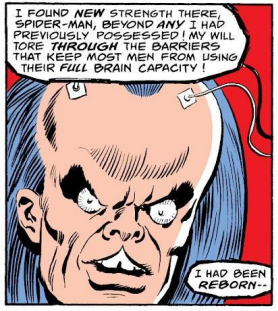
"THAT'S WHY I HAD TO DESTROY YOU--SO I WOULDN'T HEAR YOUR MIND ANYMORE! BUT YOU STRUCK FIRST--
"--AND THEN I COULDN'T HEAR ANYTHING!

"DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED NEXT, HATED ONE? I STAGGERED OUT INTO THE NIGHT LIKE A MAN GONE BLIND. YOUR ATTACK HAD SHATTERED MY MENTAL LINK TO THOSE WHOSE MINDS FED ME.

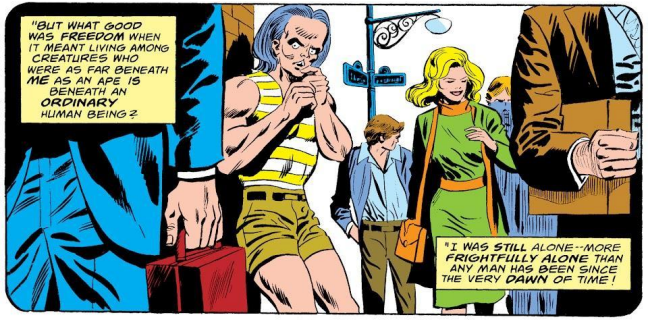
"I'D ALWAYS BEEN ALONE, BUT THE TORMENT OF THAT MOMENT WAS MORE THAN I COULD BEAR! THOUGH SURROUNDED BY HUMANITY, I WAS UNABLE TO DRAW UPON THEIR THOUGHTS FOR SUSTENANCE.
"I WAS LITERALLY STARVING TO DEATH!


"I GREW WEAKER. THE AUTHORITIES RUSHED ME TO A NEARBY HOSPITAL... BUT THOUGH THE DOCTORS WERE ABLE TO PREVENT MY UNTIMELY DEATH--
"--THEY WERE UNABLE TO RESTORE MY VITALITY.


"FOR MONTHS I LAY THERE, KEPT ALIVE BY THE COLD MACHINES SURROUNDING ME, THE DOCTORS THOUGHT I WOULD REMAIN THUS, BUT I WOULD NOT SURRENDER TO MY ACCURSED WEAKNESS.
"DENIED NOURISHMENT FROM WITHOUT, I FOCUSED ALL MY EFFORTS ON THE MIND WITHIN MY USELESS SHELL OF A BODY.


I FOUND NEW STRENGTH THERE, SPIDER-MAN, BEYOND ANY I HAD PREVIOUSLY POSSESSED! MY WILL TORE THROUGH THE BARRIERS THAT MOST MEN FROM USING THEIR FULL BRAIN CAPACITY!
I HAD BEEN REBORN--

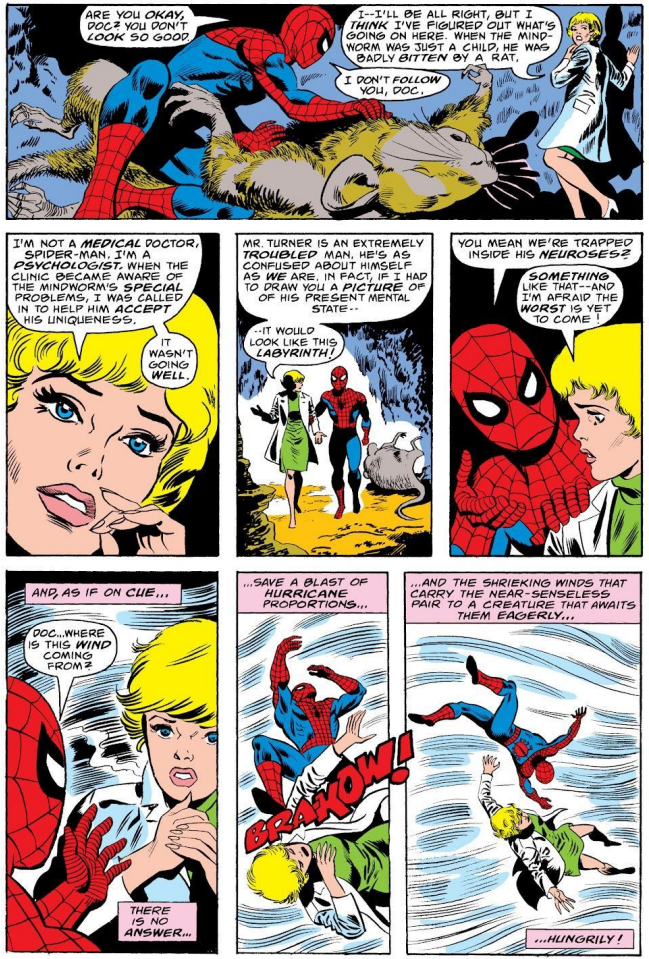
"--AND I WOULD BE FREE!


"BUT WHAT GOOD WAS FREEDOM WHEN IT MEANT LIVING AMONG CREATURES WHO WERE AS FAR BENEATH ME AS AN APE IS BENEATH AN ORDINARY HUMAN BEING?
"I WAS STILL ALONE--MORE FRIGHTFULLY ALONE THAN ANY MAN HAS BEEN SINCE THE VERY DAWN OF TIME!

AND IT WAS YOU WHO CONDEMNED ME TO THIS LIVING HELL, SPIDER-MAN!
ZAK!
AARRGH!
I THOUGHT I COULD BUY MYSELF TIME TO CATCH MY BREATH BY LETTING MINDY RATTLE ON--BUT HE RAN OUT OF STORY BEFORE I RAN OUT OF HURT!
AND HE'S GETTING READY FOR ANOTHER BLAST NOW!
PREPARE YOURSELF, MANLING! THE TIME HAS COME! YOUR PUNISHMENT AWAITS BELOW!
YOW!
THAT WASN'T MUCH OF A FALL--WHICH MEANS MINDY HAS SOME OTHER NASTY SURPRISES IN STORE FOR ME DOWN HERE.
KLEK KLEK KLEK KLEK
HMMM--SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES?
NO, IT'S A WOMAN--AND SHE LOOKS LIKE SHE'S BEEN SCARED HALF TO DEATH!
SPIDER-MAN!
THANK HEAVEN, IT'S YOU!

TAKE IT EASY, MA'AM --AT LEAST UNTIL YOU TELL ME HOW YOU FIT INTO THE MIND-WORM'S LITTLE MELODRAMA.
I'M DR. JOYCE PHILLIPS, MR. TURNER --THE MINDWORM--WAS MY PATIENT AT THE TIME HE ESCAPED FROM THE CLINIC.
YOU'LL GET USED TO MINDY'S WINNING WAYS DOC. I JUST WONDER WHY HE DUMPED US IN THIS POOR MAN'S LABYRINTH.
MAYBE I CAN EXPLAIN, YOU SEE, H--
NOOOOO!
HOO BOY!
RUN FOR IT, DOC! I DON'T KNOW IF MY WEB-SHIELD CAN HOLD THESE MONSTERS!
B-BUT...
MOVE IT!
I--I WAS TOO SLOW! ONE OF THEM GOT PAST SPIDER-MAN--
--AND NOW IT'S AFTER ME!
MEANWHILE...
UNNGH! LOOKS LIKE MICKEY HERE HAS DECIDED THAT I'M TONIGHT'S DINNER!
WELL, I HATE TO DISAPPOINT HIM--

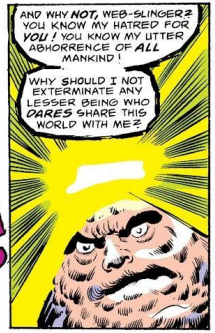
--BUT MY AUNT MAY DIDN'T RAISE ME TO BE HOT LUNCH FOR A COUPLE OF OVERGROWN MICE!
THWAK!
EEEEE
THE DOCTOR!
THE FETID BREATH OF THE CREATURE--THE SLAVERING JAWS--THESE ARE THE IMPRESSIONS THAT FILL DR. PHILLIPS' SENSES AS SHE COWERS AGAINST THE UNFEELING STONE.
SHE BELIEVES SHE WILL DIE HERE.
ANOTHER FEW SECONDS AND SHE WOULD HAVE.
SPIDER-MAN!
THE STRUGGLE IS BRUTALLY SAVAGE...
...AND MERCIFULLY BRIEF.
KRAK!


ARE YOU OKAY, DOC? YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD.
I--I'LL BE ALL RIGHT, BUT I THINK I'VE FIGURED OUT WHAT'S GOING ON HERE. WHEN THE MINDWORM WAS JUST A CHILD, HE WAS BADLY BITTEN BY A RAT.
I DON'T FOLLOW YOU, DOC.
I'M NOT A MEDICAL DOCTOR, SPIDER-MAN, I'M A PSYCHOLOGIST. WHEN THE CLINIC BECAME AWARE OF THE MINDWORM'S SPECIAL PROBLEMS, I WAS CALLED IN TO HELP HIM ACCEPT HIS UNIQUENESS.
IT WASN'T GOING WELL.
MR. TURNER IS AN EXTREMELY TROUBLED MAN. HE'S AS CONFUSED ABOUT HIMSELF AS WE ARE. IN FACT, IF I HAD TO DRAW YOU A PICTURE OF OF HIS PRESENT MENTAL STATE--
--IT WOULD LOOK LIKE THIS LABYRINTH!
YOU MEAN WE'RE TRAPPED INSIDE HIS NEUROSES?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT--AND I'M AFRAID THE WORST IS YET TO COME!
AND, AS IF ON CUE,...
DOC...WHERE IS THIS WIND COMING FROM?
THERE IS NO ANSWER...
...SAVE A BLAST OF HURRICANE PROPORTIONS...
BRAKOW!
...AND THE SHRIEKING WINDS THAT CARRY THE NEAR-SENSELESS PAIR TO A CREATURE THAT AWAITS THEM EAGERLY,...
...HUNGRILY!

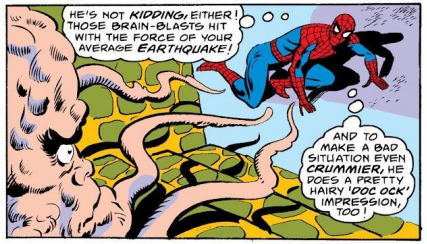
# CHAPTER 3 THE ONCE AND FUTURE MINDWORM

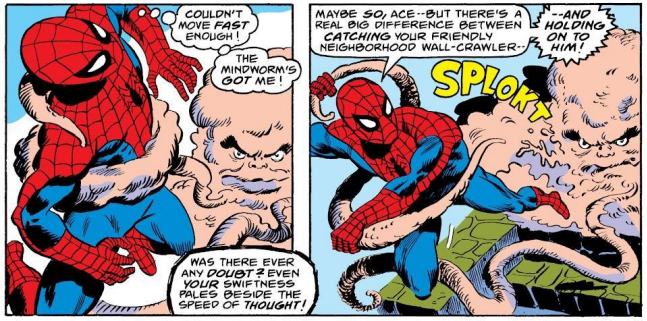
AH...YOU HAVE REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS. BUT YOU SEEM ALMOST SURPRISED BY MY APPEARANCE.
CAN IT BE THAT YOU ARE AMAZED AT THE DIRECTION MY GLORIOUS REBIRTH HAS TAKEN?
HOLY...
DOC... WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?
WHAT I FEARED MIGHT HAPPEN.

THIS IS HOW THE MINDWORM SEES HIMSELF--A CREATURE TOTALLY APART FROM THE REST OF MANKIND. INSTEAD OF OVERCOMING HIS FEELINGS OF ALIENATION, HE'S GIVEN IN TO THEM COMPLETELY!
WE'VE GOT TO HELP HIM, SPIDER-MAN--
--BEFORE HIS HUMANITY IS LOST FOREVER!


AND WHY NOT, WEB-SLINGER? YOU KNOW MY HATRED FOR YOU! YOU KNOW MY UTTER ABHORRENCE OF ALL MANKIND!
WHY SHOULD I NOT EXTERMINATE ANY LESSER BEING WHO DARES SHARE THIS WORLD WITH ME?

SORRY, MUSHMIND, BUT I DRAW THE LINE AT DEBATING PHILOSOPHY WITH CERTIFIED PSYCHOS--
STRAKK
ZAK!
--AND NO MATTER HOW SORRY I MIGHT FEEL FOR A JOE AS MESSED UP AS YOU ARE--
--THERE'S JUST SOMETHING ABOUT THAT "EXTERMINATING LESSER BEINGS" LINE THAT STICKS IN MY CRAW--
--AND MAKES ME JUST PLAIN MAD!


HE'S NOT KIDDING, EITHER! THOSE BRAIN-BLASTS HIT WITH THE FORCE OF YOUR AVERAGE EARTHQUAKE!
AND TO MAKE A BAD SITUATION EVEN CRUMMIER, HE DOES A PRETTY HAIRY 'DOC OCK' IMPRESSION, TOO!


COULDN'T MOVE FAST ENOUGH!
THE MINDWORM'S GOT ME!
WAS THERE EVER ANY DOUBT? EVEN YOUR SWIFTNESS PALES BESIDE THE SPEED OF THOUGHT!


MAYBE SO, ACE--BUT THERE'S A REAL BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CATCHING YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD WALL-CRAWLER--
--AND HOLDING ON TO HIM!
SPLOK!

WILL YOU NEVER LEARN?
ARRGH!

HE'S ATTACKING YOU THROUGH YOUR MIND, SPIDER-MAN! YOU CAN'T DEFEAT HIM ON A PHYSICAL LEVEL!
YOU'VE GOT TO REMIND HIM THAT HE'S HUMAN!

SHE'S RIGHT! IF THE MINDWORM CAN READ MY THOUGHTS, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO ATTACK HIM THE SAME WAY!
BUT CAN I SURVIVE LONG ENOUGH TO GET THROUGH TO HIM?

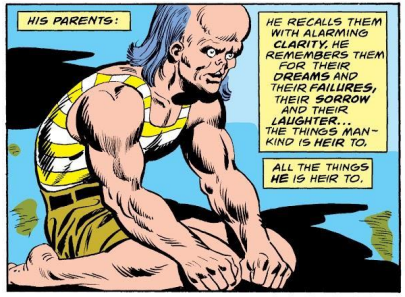
I DOUBT IT VERY MUCH, SPIDER-MAN!
AFTER ALL, YOU'RE ONLY HUMAN!
HHUUNNFF!

AND WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, JERKO? DO YOU THINK YOU CAN QUIT THE HUMAN RACE WHENEVER YOU FEEL LIKE IT?
UH-UH, PALLY! YOU'RE STUCK WITH THE REST OF US POOR SLOBS FROM CRADLE TO GRAVE!
DIDN'T YOUR PARENTS EVER TELL YOU ABOUT THAT?

MY PARENTS?
HOW DARE YOU MENTION MY PARENTS?
ARRRH!

IT WASN'T MY FAULT THAT THEY DIED! I WAS JUST A CHILD! I COULDN'T CONTROL MY POWER!
I DIDN'T WANT TO DRAIN THEIR STRENGTH!
I DIDN'T WANT TO KILL THEM!

YOU'VE DONE IT, SPIDER-MAN. YOU CUT TO THE HEART OF HIS ALIENATION: HIS GUILT OVER THE DEATH OF HIS PARENTS!
LUCKY ME! EVERY BONE IN MY BODY FEELS LIKE IT'S BEEN USED FOR BATTING PRACTISE!
LOOK! HE'S REGAINED HIS HUMAN FORM!

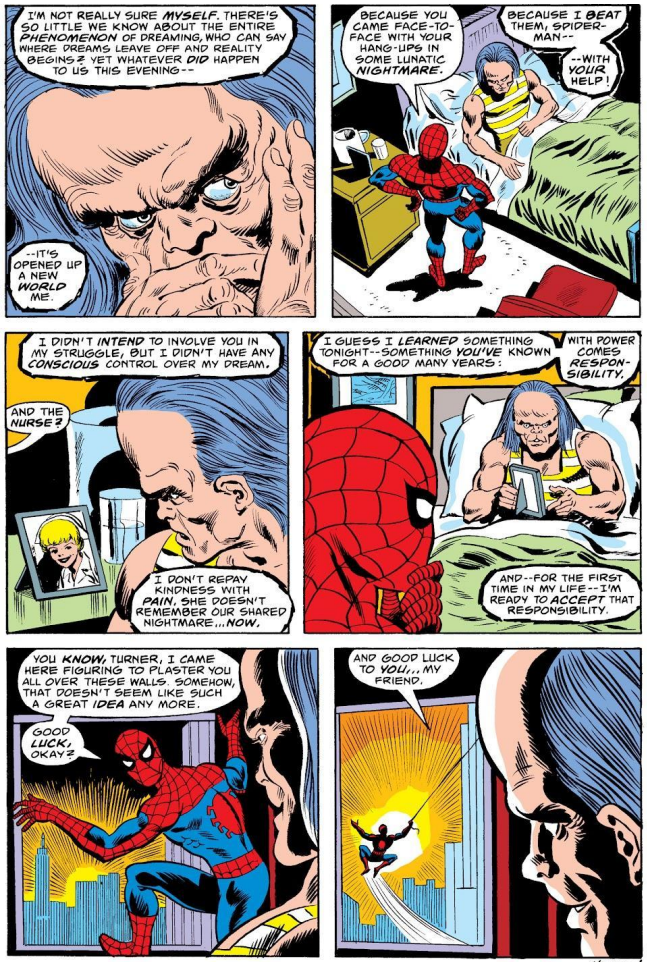

HIS PARENTS:
HE RECALLS THEM WITH ALARMING CLARITY. HE REMEMBERS THEM FOR THEIR DREAMS AND THEIR FAILURES, THEIR SORROW AND THEIR LAUGHTER... THE THINGS MANKIND IS HEIR TO.
ALL THE THINGS HE IS HEIR TO.

HE LOOKS TO THE HEAVENS LIKE A BLIND MAN WHO'S SUDDENLY BEEN GIVEN SIGHT...
...AND THEN HE IS GONE.

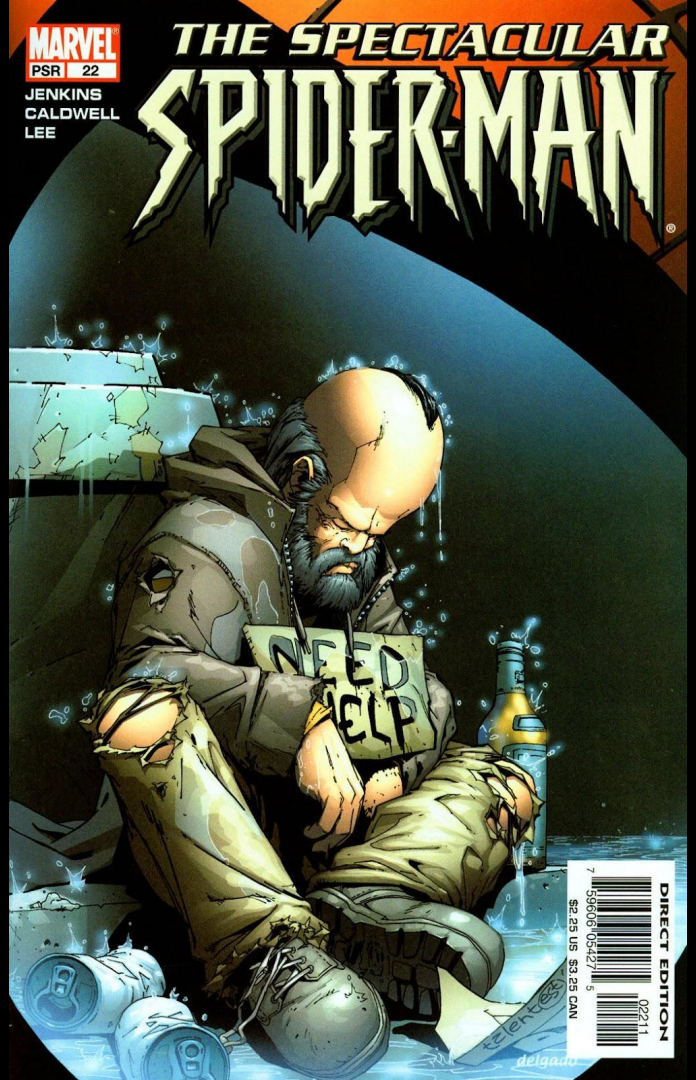
IT'S OVER, JOYCE. IT'S ACTUALLY OVER. IN THIS MADMAN'S MAZE, I FINALLY CAME TO GRIPS WITH A DEADLY FOE--

--AND DEFEATED HIM FOR ALL TIME!

IT WAS ONLY A NIGHTMARE, HE TELLS HIMSELF AS HE AWAKENS IN AN ICY SWEAT.
HE ALMOST CONVINCES HIMSELF.
ALMOST...
FACE IT, PARKER! YOU DIDN'T GET UP AT FIVE IN THE MORNING JUST TO AIR YOUR COSTUME OUT!
YOU'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHAT WENT DOWN TONIGHT OR YOU MAY NEVER SLEEP EASY AGAIN!
MANHATTAN PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL
AND THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON YOU CAN GO TO FOR THE FACTS.
PRESENTLY...
THERE'S THE MINDWORM. I'D HEARD HE WAS BROUGHT HERE AFTER OUR BATTLE AND THAT LOOKS LIKE JOYCE PHILLIPS WITH HIM. BUT IF SHE'S HIS PSYCHOLOGIST--
HOW COME SHE'S WEARING A NURSE'S UNIFORM?
I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW NIGHT, WILLIAM. REMEMBER: YOU PROMISED TO HELP ME CRAM FOR MY PSYCH FINAL.
SHE'S LEAVING, NOW'S MY CHANCE TO ASK "WILLIAM" A FEW POINTED QUESTIONS.
THEN BY ALL MEANS ASK THEM, SPIDER-MAN.
SO YOU CAN READ MY THOUGHTS. OKAY, I SHOULD'VE EXPECTED SOMETHING LIKE THAT, ANYWAY.
I'LL GET RIGHT TO THE POINT, TURNER. JUST WHAT HAPPENED TONIGHT? WAS IT REAL, OR JUST A DREAM?


I'M NOT REALLY SURE MYSELF. THERE'S SO LITTLE WE KNOW ABOUT THE ENTIRE PHENOMENON OF DREAMING, WHO CAN SAY WHERE DREAMS LEAVE OFF AND REALITY BEGINS? YET WHATEVER DID HAPPEN TO US THIS EVENING--
--IT'S OPENED UP A NEW WORLD TO ME.
BECAUSE YOU CAME FACE-TO-FACE WITH YOUR HANG-UPS IN SOME LUNATIC NIGHTMARE.
BECAUSE I BEAT THEM, SPIDER-MAN--
--WITH YOUR HELP!
I DIDN'T INTEND TO INVOLVE YOU IN MY STRUGGLE, BUT I DIDN'T HAVE ANY CONSCIOUS CONTROL OVER MY DREAM.
AND THE NURSE?
I DON'T REPAY KINDNESS WITH PAIN. SHE DOESN'T REMEMBER OUR SHARED NIGHTMARE...NOW.
I GUESS I LEARNED SOMETHING TONIGHT--SOMETHING YOU'VE KNOWN FOR A GOOD MANY YEARS:
WITH POWER COMES RESPONSIBILITY.
AND--FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE--I'M READY TO ACCEPT THAT RESPONSIBILITY.
YOU KNOW, TURNER, I CAME HERE FIGURING TO PLASTER YOU ALL OVER THESE WALLS. SOMEHOW, THAT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE SUCH A GREAT IDEA ANY MORE.
GOOD LUCK, OKAY?
AND GOOD LUCK TO YOU,,, MY FRIEND.

*the end.*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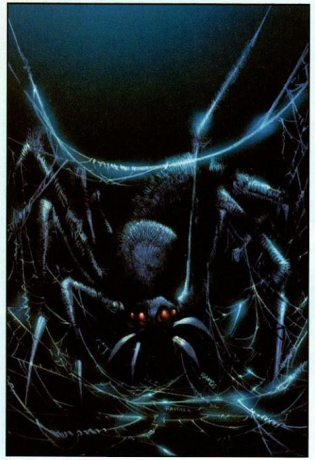
AT A DEMONSTRATION ON RADIATION, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PETER PARKER WAS BITTEN BY AN IRRADIATED SPIDER FROM WHICH HE GAINED THE ARACHNID'S INCREDIBLE ABILITIES. WHEN A BURGLAR KILLED HIS BELOVED UNCLE BEN, A GRIEF-STRICKEN PETER VOWED TO USE HIS GREAT POWERS IN THE SERVICE OF HIS FELLOW MAN, BECAUSE HE LEARNED AN INVALUABLE LESSON: WITH GREAT POWER THERE MUST ALSO COME GREAT RESPONSIBILITY.

# THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN

## "THE INFERNAL TRIANGLE"

## PREVIOUSLY



**Peter Parker--the Spectacular Spider-Man--has just recovered from a dramatic transformation at the hands of Ana Soria, a.k.a. the Queen. Ana's remarkable mutation, enhanced by U.S. military experiments, allowed her to change Peter into an actual spider!**

**Ana's plan backfired, releasing Peter from his arachnid form--but something has changed. His senses are enhanced, his body more muscular, and he can now shoot organic webbing from his wrists. These new powers imply untold possibilities for his identity as Spider-Man.**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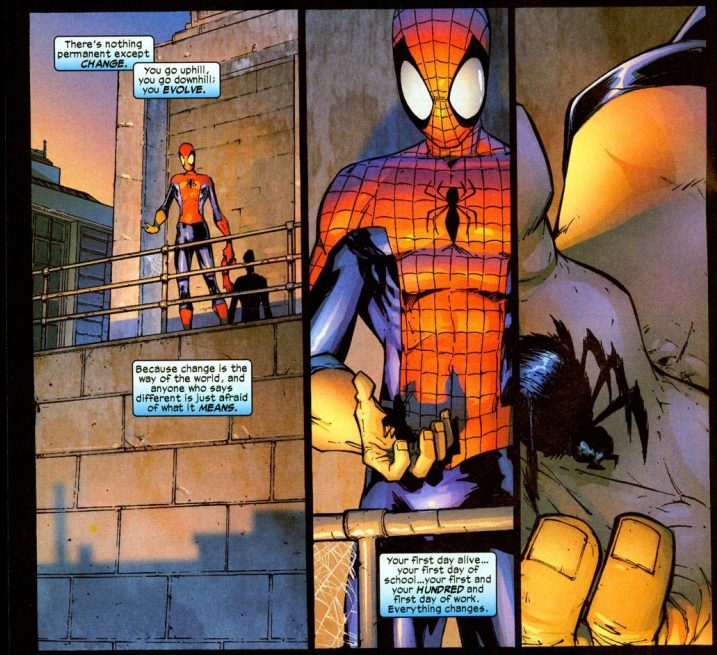
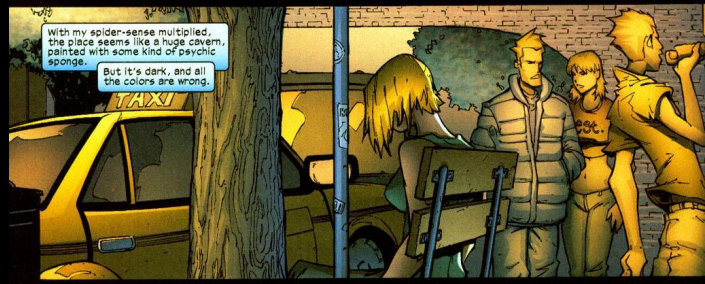

There's nothing permanent except CHANGE.
You go uphill, you go downhill; you EVOLVE.
Because change is the way of the world, and anyone who says different is just afraid of what it MEANS.
Your first day alive... your first day of school...your first and your HUNDRED and first day of work. Everything changes.

You change careers; you change your mind about life, love and your favorite football player. You change your MIND and you change your VOTE.
You change into a freakin' SPIDER.

HERE YOU GO, LITTLE BUDDY... DON'T DO ANYTHING I WOULDN'T DO.
LIKE MUTATE INTO A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SPECIES.
From up here, the people below always seem like ANTS: there's a method to what they're doing and where they're GOING...but only THEY know for sure.
You can only find out their intent by going down below.
And then they don't seem like ants anymore.
121

Probably no one can see it as I do, but something is vastly different in this particular section of the anthill. Something about this particular city block...
A kid clatters his board down the sidewalk, looking for someone to run into. A minor fender bender turns into a major scuffle.
TAXI


With my spider-sense multiplied, the place seems like a huge cavern, painted with some kind of psychic sponge.
But it's dark, and all the colors are wrong.
TAXI

A girl cries...jilted by a boy she never liked anyway. Two lovers argue but they have no idea WHY.
This city block has become a wasteland--it's a pocket of human misery.

And the source is somewhere down there.

I move in, attempting to triangulate... hairs stand up on the back of my neck. The origin of all this misery is somewhere under the bridge.
Spider-sense clatters as a train passes overhead. This is all messed up.
Right THERE. Nobody knows it...but I do. This poor wretch is the reason for all of the misery in the neighborhood.
Lost in a morass of apathetic passers-by, he can't see the infernal triangle he's created for himself.
Homeless guy...empty plate... bottle of booze. No one's going to give him any money 'cause he'll just spend it on more booze. He's too far gone to understand.
An' suddenly, I realize there's more to this story--a LOT more.
I KNOW this guy.

# THE INFERNAL TRIANGLE

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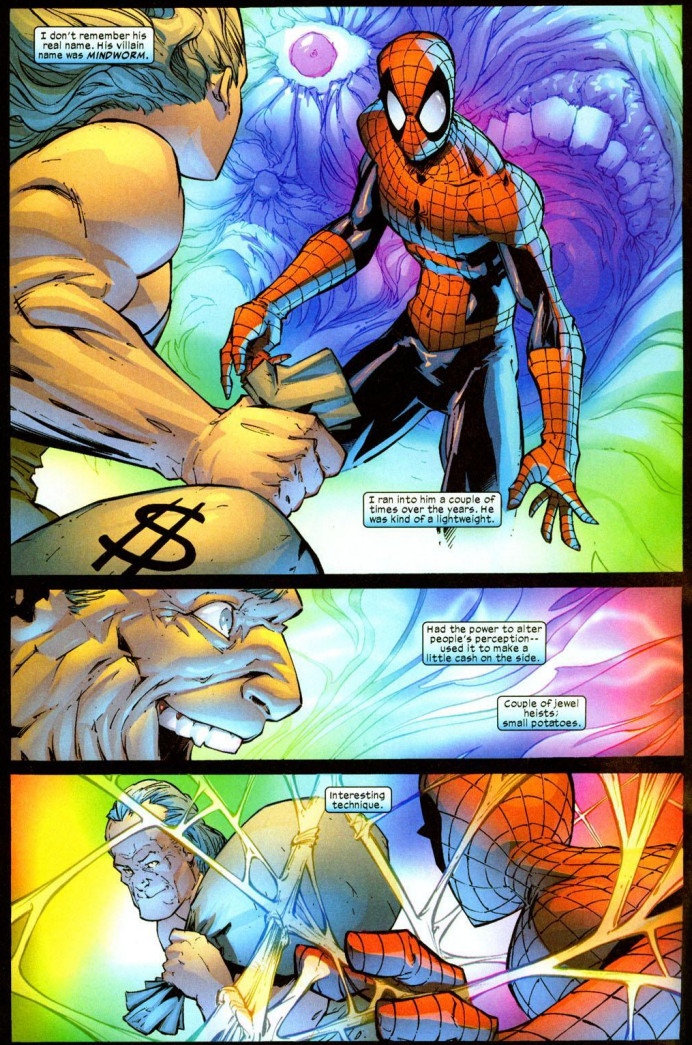
I KNOW this guy. But he's CHANGED.
Uphill. Downhill.
On the tracks and off again.
His story unfolds in my mind: how did he get here? What happened to him? Where has he been?
How am I responsible?
He used to BE someone. But now he's just another drunk, drifting in and out of the world and taking everyone along for the ride.
Psychically projecting his misery onto everyone and everything for an entire city block.


I don't remember his real name. His villain name was MINDWORM.
I ran into him a couple of times over the years. He was kind of a lightweight.
Had the power to alter people's perception--used it to make a little cash on the side.
Couple of jewel heists; small potatoes.
Interesting technique.

I remember he looked so tired the last time we carted him off to jail. I got the sense he never had the heart for crime in the first place.
POL

They held him at Ravencroft for a while. I talked to his parole officer about a month after he went down.
He was a model prisoner. The medication helped him a lot. They let him out to minimum security after only a year or so.

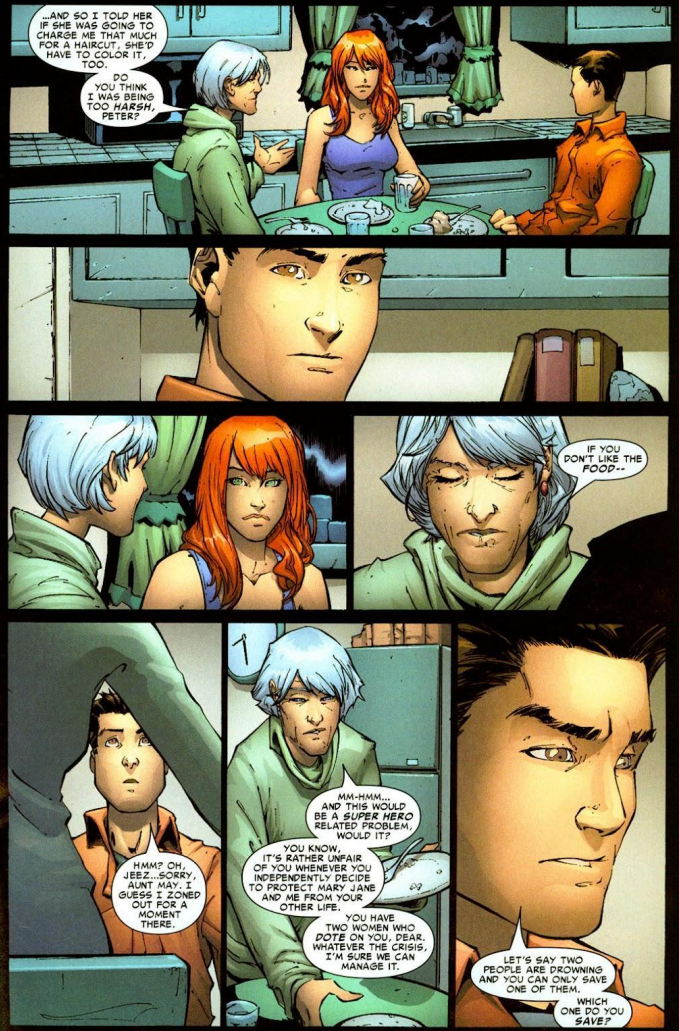
A lot can change in a year. EVERY-THING changes.
I guess I never really wondered what happened to him.

And now I KNOW.

...####...M'BISS... COUPLA BUCKS... ###...SUMTH'N T'EAT..?

I'm the Spider-Man, with all the power in the world, and it's still not enough to affect the outcome.
What do I DO? Who do I PUNCH to fix the problem?

All I can give is my sympathy and my umbrella.
And neither of those is ENOUGH.


...AND SO I TOLD HER IF SHE WAS GOING TO CHARGE ME THAT MUCH FOR A HAIRCUT, SHE'D HAVE TO COLOR IT, TOO.
DO YOU THINK I WAS BEING TOO HARSH, PETER?
IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE FOOD--
HMM? OH, JEEZ...SORRY, AUNT MAY. I GUESS I ZONED OUT FOR A MOMENT THERE.
MM-HMM... AND THIS WOULD BE A SUPER HERO RELATED PROBLEM, WOULD IT?
YOU KNOW, IT'S RATHER UNFAIR OF YOU WHENEVER YOU INDEPENDENTLY DECIDE TO PROTECT MARY JANE AND ME FROM YOUR OTHER LIFE.
YOU HAVE TWO WOMEN WHO DOTE ON YOU, DEAR. WHATEVER THE CRISIS, I'M SURE WE CAN MANAGE IT.
LET'S SAY TWO PEOPLE ARE DROWNING AND YOU CAN ONLY SAVE ONE OF THEM.
WHICH ONE DO YOU SAVE?

IS THIS A CONUNDRUM, TIGER?
NOPE. A REAL-LIFE PROBLEM.
AN EX-CON I KNOW. CLEANED UP HIS ACT FOR A WHILE BUT HE'S FALLEN ON HARD TIMES. I THINK HE'S LOST HIS MIND.
I FOUND HIM OUT ON THE STREETS YESTERDAY, WASHING HIS PROBLEMS AWAY WITH A BOTTLE OF CHEAP BLENDED SCOTCH.
YOU CAN'T SAVE EVERYBODY, BABE.
THAT'S MY POINT: WHAT IF I CHOOSE TO HELP THIS GUY? WHY HIM AND NOT ANY ONE OF FIFTY OTHER HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE SAME ALLEY?
YOU'RE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF, SWEETHEART. YOU SAVE A GUY IN BROOKLYN, YOU WEREN'T THERE TO SAVE SOMBONE IN THE BRONX.
IT HAPPENS. IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.
IT'S NOT FAIR, AUNT MAY.
YOU'RE A HERO, PETER: YOU'RE SPIDER-MAN, NOT GOD.
DON'T YOU PEOPLE EVER CONSIDER WRITING TO YOUR CONGRESS-MAN?

Next couple of days, I get to thinking about the big picture of what's happened here.
That's always dangerous for a guy with a history like mine.

I think about Mindworm's plight, trying to remember the mistakes I must have made.
How many times did I LAUGH at the guy when I was taking him apart?

How many nights did I go home and complain about my life to my beautiful girl while he sat in a puddle of his own puke and wondered where his next drink was coming from?
When did he first realize he was losing his mind? How many people did he try, in his own way, to tell?

Does he have a family?
Do any of them CARE?

Ironic, isn't it, how he finally got inside my mind.
I get to realizing this one, solitary ex-con is the mirror held up to everything I do and everything I AM.

A man is measured by the smallest margins, not by the great deeds but by the little things.
It's not the Green Goblins or the Electros that define me, but what I did for a guy like Mindworm.

Mary Jane will always tell me, "You're too hard on yourself. Don't beat yourself up."
Easy to say...but truth be told, I treat this great power of mine like a TOY. I'm never hard enough.

He probably was ALWAYS mentally ill.
And I treated him like a CRIMINAL.

A week passes. One thing leads to another, and I "accidentally on purpose" pass by Mindworm's neck of the woods with some half-baked plan to take him to a doctor I know.
Unsure if I'm here for him...

...or for ME.
SOMETHING'S WRONG.

Still alive... they ALL are.
Their pulses are slow but steady. I've seen this before.

It can be caused by a massive surge of neural energy, usually expended by anyone who comes under prolonged psychic attack.
I've waited just a moment too long.

...THOUGHT WE TOLD YOU FREAKS TO STAY AWAY FROM HERE, DIDN'T I SAY THAT, FREAK?
CHICKEN SCRATCH AIN'T LISTENIN', JERRY. MAKE 'IM LISTEN.

OH, BUDDHA...
...DON'T DO THAT!

KRASH!

AAAIIGGH!!

OHH... LORD, NO!
MINDWORM! TURN IT OFF!

UHFF!

NO! GETTAWAY FROM ME! GETTAWAY!

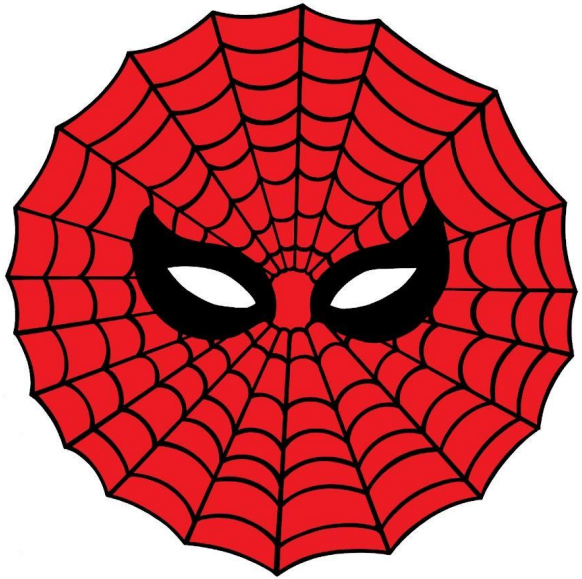
NEEEE

NUHHHH

Mindworm's nightmare visions are distilled, concentrated.
Like hard liquor.
Vapors of the heart and soul.
Guaranteed to dull your senses and wipe your mind clean.
SHAKE IT OFF, WEBS...IT'S NOT REAL...
Not real--it can't be.
I try to tell myself that, but I can't be sure.
NOBODY can say what's real.

BAM
NNAHH! I HATE YOU, POPPA!
I HATE YOU!
BAM
BAM
MINDWORM... LISTEN TO ME: YOU GOTTA TRY TO CALM DOWN! THIS ISN'T REAL! IT'S IN YOUR MIND!
STAY AWAY, PIG!
SLASSH!
AA-AHH!
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU DID TO ME, POPPA.
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU DID!

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE, BENNY!
THWIP
We wait too long.
We always do.
+AA-UHH+
KRAK
And after we've waited it's always too LATE.

YEAH... THAT'S IT, BENNY! YOU JUST KEEP GOING!
BUT DON'T TRY TO SLEEP THIS WEEK, 'CAUSE I KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE, YOU LITTLE PIECE OF DIRT!
Too long.
Too little. Too late.
I'm like the CLEANING lady for this city.
YOU OKAY, PAL?
MINDWORM?
Yeah...that's me: I'm the cleaning lady.
Always got some kind of SOLUTION.

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